



Nationalism, not the Russians, got Trump elected

As a general rule, the most successful man in life is the man who has the best information

Nationalism. Populism. Nativism. All of these words have been used to describe the reason for Donald Trump's unlikely rise to power, and while each is defined a bit differently, they all share the same over-arching principle: that Trump tapped into an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with status quo politics, of excessive liberalism, of pandering to minorities, of Washington insiders doing the bidding of high-paid lobbyists, and most importantly, a sense that Americans were losing their country to elites who no longer represented the majority.

In early February, 13 Russians and three Russian companies were [charged with interfering in the 2016 presidential election](#), adding fodder to the theory, often espoused by the left, that Russian intelligence agencies conspired to change the outcome of the election because they favored Trump over Hillary Clinton. The indictment said that Russians created bogus Internet postings, posed as American political activists, and bought advertisements, all with the intent to "sow discord in the US political system."

Personally I believe that the Russians did help Trump (after all we are talking about a country that specializes in information warfare and created the KGB) but this whole business of Russian meddling is a red herring. The Russians only put \$1.25 million a month towards interference efforts, a paltry sum compared to the \$617 million Trump spent on his campaign and \$1.2 billion Clinton spent on hers. For this and other reasons, Nate Silver, editor of political website Five Thirty Eight, concludes that [Russian interference likely had a minimal effect](#) on the outcome of the election. I agree.

From [Forbes](#), "Depending on who you believe, Donald Trump won the election because of [Russian hackers](#), [last-minute FBI announcements](#), [fake news](#), or because [Hillary Clinton was a bad candidate](#). A [new study](#) from the

Harvard Kennedy School pins the blame on the news media—specifically the “overwhelmingly negative” tone of news coverage and the “extremely light” coverage of policy issues.”

The real reason for Trump's election has nothing to do with Russian trolls and everything to do with Americans' anger with a federal government out of touch with average blue and white collar workers who see threats to their country both from outside (terrorism, war) and within (immigrants). Economic malaise in some parts of the country, particularly the Rust Belt and depressed coal-producing regions, of course played a part too, along with the usual tendency of US voters to vote along party lines regardless of the candidate (“my father and his grandfather voted Republican and there's no damn way I'm gonna vote for some Democrat”). This article will argue that nationalism, or its more politically correct cousin, populism, was the real bullet in the barrel fired on election night that resulted in reality TV star, uber-capitalist, and nationalist Donald Trump becoming the 45th President.

Trump and nationalism

So what was it? The media concluded that Trump's victory was all down to a bunch of angry white men who bought into Trump's anti-Muslim, anti-Mexican rhetoric, and also his “strong man” view that he could fix all that was wrong with the American economy – ideas particularly appealing to the middle-aged unemployed and under-employed.

But the election statistics paint a much different picture. A lot more than under-educated, rural white men voted for Trump, including many educated women, minorities, suburbanites and those with white collar jobs living in suburbs.

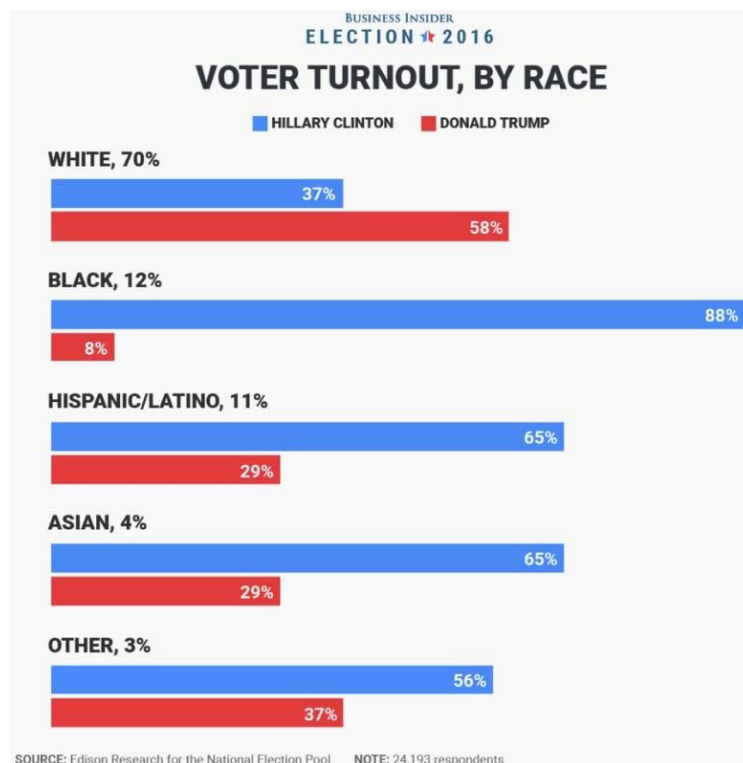
Business Insider [broke down the election results](#) based on exit polls.

Donald Trump, running on a populist/nationalist platform, convinced 61 million Americans - 53% of white women, 63% of white male college graduates, 47% of white Americans between the ages of 18 and 29, almost 1 of 3 Hispanics, and 48% of white college graduates - to vote for him to be the next U.S. President.

The vast majority of Trump's base supporters are much more moderate than CNN's constant barrage of talking heads and relentless video of Nazis, skinheads and klukkers suggests.

The average Trump voter was well educated, working and not living in a rural area; many were middle-class, well-off suburban whites – rural voters only make up 17% of the electorate.

The below graph is particularly illuminating as it shows the importance of race in the election: 70% of the turnout was white and 57% of them voted for Trump. While just 8% of blacks voted for Trump, 29% of Hispanics and Asians cast a ballot for him, despite Trump's inflammatory remarks on Mexico and China.



Also surprising was the number of women who voted for Trump despite the dozen women who accused him during the campaign of sexual assault, and his pledge to roll back women's ability to control their own fertility.

Pundits have pointed to an ugly racist undercurrent that many voters agreed with Trump on, as the reason that propelled him into power against a seemingly experienced and capable, though highly mistrusted opponent. While this is hard to prove, there is evidence to support the success of this strategy to exploit racial intolerance.

Newsweek quoted an exit poll that showed the biggest issue for Trump voters was immigration, not foreign policy, the economy or terrorism, with 84% saying the government should deport undocumented migrants.

Analysts say Trump's success among white voters is partly attributable to his tapping into concerns about immigration and a feeling among many voters that the U.S. should be a white, Christian country. - Newsweek

White nationalism is intimately tied with religion. The Newsweek article quotes a poll of 4,000 Americans which found that "43 percent of respondents thought that the abundant natural resources in the U.S. were a sign that God wanted America to lead the rest of the world. Sixty percent of those surveyed believed that the U.S. holds a special place in God's plan."

Other concepts that Trump espoused which resonated with white Americans included the idea that Muslims and illegal immigrants were a threat ("They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists") and a growing frustration among some people of having a black president for two terms, who emboldened African-Americans through the rise of "Black Lives Matter", for example.

"There is a feeling in the U.S. that there has been an excess of liberalism," Newsweek quoted an associate professor of political science at the University of California, Irvine. "People want to take back what was rightfully theirs and for some that includes taking back the color of the presidency."

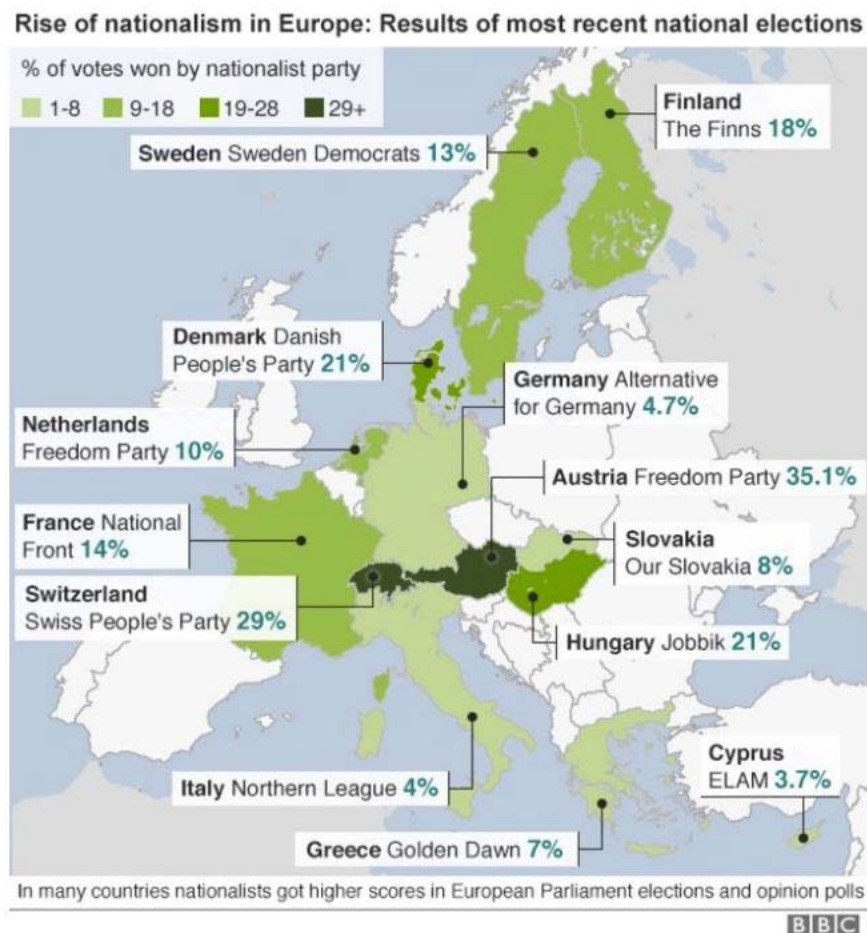
Populism. What is it?

Of course, the rise of Trump has been paralleled elsewhere in the world and is frequently held up as the most powerful example of ["populism"](#), which refers to the idea that society is divided between common people and the elites. Trump's campaign promise to "drain the swamp" in Washington was certainly a populist notion, and it's nothing new. Often the populist leader is seen as representing the will of the people and is commanding the charge against a broken political system or a corrupt liberal elite.

Venezuela's Hugo Chavez was a populist on the left side of the political spectrum, but the term has most recently been used to describe right-leaning leaders including Trump, France's Marine LePen, Viktor Orbán from Hungary, Nigel Farage from the UK Independence Party, and Norbert Hofer, leader of Austria's far-right Freedom Party.

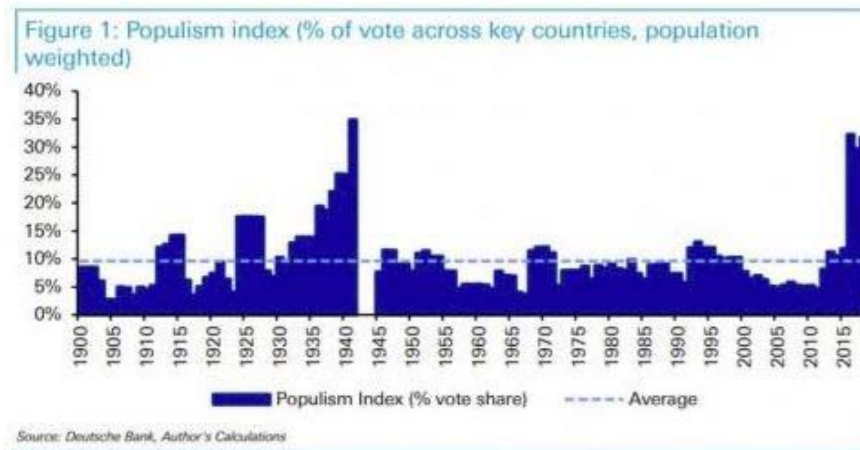
The BBC drew a good map of the way [far-right parties are changing the European political landscape](#). In Europe much of the discontentment, and fuel for the right, is directed towards migrants, mostly from war-torn Syria but also Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and African countries. Europeans feel their countries are being changed, and their national identities diluted by

global forces beyond their control, without their consent, and they don't like it.



The latest manifestation of populism occurred in Italy, where the far-right [Five Star Movement won about a third of the votes cast](#), and is likely to become the king-maker in a coalition government. Its leader, Matteo Salvini, has called for the expulsion of migrants. Even Canada, normally a bastion of progressive, multicultural thinking, has found itself faced with a new leader at odds with such ideas. Doug Ford, brother of the late Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, last Saturday was [named leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party](#).

According to Deutsche Bank's populism index, which measures the prevalence of populism since 1900, the percentage of votes for populist parties, weighted by population, is now around 32% - the highest it's been since World War II. [Zero Hedge put together a chart:](#)



As mentioned, dissatisfaction with government policies is common to populism, and becomes a potent cauldron when populations find themselves swamped by outsiders, when jobs are scarce, and there is growing income inequality.

In the United States and Europe, the perceived threat at the top of the list is migration, where concerns about cultural identity, economic opportunity, and terrorism intersect. Encouraged by populists, an expanding segment of the public sees rights as protecting only these "other" people, not themselves, and thus as dispensable. If the majority wants to limit the rights of refugees, migrants, or minorities, the populists suggest, it should be free to do so. That international treaties and institutions stand in the way only intensifies this antipathy toward rights in a world where nativism is often prized over globalism. - Kenneth Roth, The Dangerous Rise of Populism

"The highest rewards in a globalized world going to the highly educated and the well-connected, while working and middle classes are now fragmented, losing bargaining power and sometimes regarded with scorn for their "incorrect" views," [wrote John Lloyd, who co-founded the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford](#). Lloyd mentions Hillary Clinton's speech in which she described Trump supporters as "deplorables" as an example of progressive snobbery. "It may have cost her more votes than Russian fake news." Ironical isn't it that the FBI who the Dems hated so passionately for resurfacing Clinton's email scandal are now the Democrat champions in the collusion with Russia investigation against Trump.

In May 2017, new data sets from the economists Piketty, Saez, and [Gabriel Zucman of University of California, Berkeley](#) demonstrate that inequality runs much deeper than previous data indicated. The share of incomes for those in the bottom half of the U.S. population stagnated and declined during the years 1980 to 2014 from 20% in 1980 to 12% in 2014. By

contrast, the top 1% share of income grew from 12% in 1980 to 20% in 2014. The top 1% now makes on average 81 times more than the bottom 50% of adults, where as in 1981 they made 27 times more. Pretax incomes for the top 0.001% surged 636% during the years 1980 to 2014. The economists also note that the growth of inequality during the 1970s to the 1990s can be attributed to wage growth among top earners, but the ever-widening gap has been "a capital-driven phenomenon since the late 1990s." Wikipedia

Then there is the theme that several countries in Europe, as well as the United States, are fed up with globalism and want to return to the idea of the "nation-state" where the right to national self-determination is fundamental. Trump's contempt for the UN and other multilateral bodies is an example of this, as was the pro-Brexit movement in the UK which argued that remaining in the European Union was not in Britain's best interest.

What we are seeing is the rise of the nation-state against the will of multinational organizations and agreements. There are serious questions about membership in the EU, NATO and trade agreements, and equally about the right to control borders... We are seeing a return to nationalism in Europe and the United States because it is not clear to many that internationalism, as followed since World War II, benefits them any longer." George Friedman, Nationalism is Rising not Fascism

To this it should be noted that nationalism particularly in Europe has for decades been seen as a dirty word, since it was "national socialism" in Italy and Germany that gave rise to Hitler and Mussolini. The birth of the European Economic Community through the [Treaty of Rome](#) in 1957 was primarily to bury the idea of nationalism in Europe. Its earlier incarnation, the Treaty of Paris of 1951, created the European Coal and Steel Community, whose aim was to pool French and German steel production in order to strengthen Franco-German cooperation and banish the possibility of war.

As the European Community evolved into the European Union, European elites stood by a common vision of "the European" whose characteristics included a preference for free trade, open borders, and so-called progressive ideas like same-sex marriage. Now [that is all being questioned](#).

For more than a generation, the Western elites settled into a consensus on most major issues—from the benefits of free trade and immigration to the need for marriage equality. Their uniformity on these basic questions consigned dissenters to the political fringe—further aggravating the sense of grievance that now threatens the mainstream.

That is what helped Farage, Le Pen and other European populists find an audience in 2016. They wanted Europe to be a mosaic of states instead of an integrated commonwealth with a shared currency and open borders. They wanted, in short, for Europe to look more like it did before the E.U.'s grand experiment, never mind that this experiment was designed to prevent the nations of Europe from engaging in an endless cycle of wars. - Simon Shuster, Time Magazine

Globalists vs populists

Key to understanding what's behind populism is that it is fervently anti-globalist. Globalism, or globalization, could be traced as far back as the 13th century with Marco Polo's adventures on the Silk Road and the establishment of early trade routes through China, the Middle East and far Eastern Europe (the Silk Road terminated in Istanbul). European exploration that led to the discovery of the New World in the 1600s was another early manifestation of globalism, where thoughts, goods and people (yes, it included slavery) were shipped across oceans.

The more modern idea of globalization took shape in 19th-century Britain, where one of its first disciples, Richard Cobden, sowed the seeds of our current economic framework with a speech at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester in 1846:

"I look farther; I see in the Free Trade principle that which shall act on the moral world as the principle of gravitation in the universe - drawing men together, thrusting aside the antagonisms of race, and creed, and language, and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace."

In the same year the British parliament repealed the [Corn Laws](#), which had placed tariffs on imported grain and other foods coming into Britain from its colonies. The tariffs were meant to protect domestic producers and also the profits of landowners. But they also kept domestic food prices high, which led to a movement, the Anti-Corn League, to do away with them. The Irish famine forced a resolution to the problem because of an urgent need for food supplies, and the Corn Laws were repealed despite opposition from most members of the Conservative government led by Prime Minister Robert Peel. Economic historians see this development as a major shift toward free trade in Britain.

The post-World War II framework for globalization was first laid out at the Bretton Woods Conference where countries planned to increase global economic growth by lowering trade barriers – formalized through GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) which morphed into the World

Trade Organization.

Modern-day globalization is seen as the inter-dependence of national economies through cross-border movement of goods, services, technology, capital and workers. Examples of such trade blocs are the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Union which is underpinned by a common currency. Concrete manifestations of globalization include the development of international standards, containerization which made the transport of ocean-going freight easier and cost-effective, and the outsourcing of services like call centers in India and the Philippines.

But 172 years of globalization have not resulted in its promised rewards. Income equality in the UK and the US particularly has never been higher, companies have left their home countries to set up factories where labor is cheaper, and the ideal of the free movement of labor leading to economic growth has been lost amongst the wave of migrants turning up on European shores, hoping for better lives but also competing with locals for scarce jobs and dependent, at least initially, on government handouts.

Trump and other populists have finally said enough of globalism, it's time to go back to the original idea of the nation-state where local workers and industries are protected and, most of the rest of the world is walled off. The surge in US trade deficits since the end of the Cold War has also been an important factor in nationalism upending globalism.

The Bank of America summarized the anti-globalization shifts in the Trump presidency, just over a year after taking office. They include the imposition of travel restrictions on certain Muslim states; withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on climate change; backing out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership; threatening to tear up NAFTA; imposing tariffs on Canadian paper, washing machines and solar panels; and the latest, tariffs on imported steel and aluminum from most exporters except Canada and Mexico.

Trump and his supporters want to go back to a time when the US put the nation first, and potential trade partners second. Ironically, this was the original thinking of the founders of the Constitution. In the Tariff Act of 1789, President George Washington said in his first address to Congress: "A free people ... should promote such manufactures as tend to make them independent on others for essential, particularly military supplies," conservative commentator [Pat Buchanan references in a column on his website](#).

Two years later, Alexander Hamilton wrote "Every nation ought to endeavor to possess within itself all the essentials of national supply. These comprise

the means of subsistence, habitat, clothing and defence.”

We'll go further into this idea of America needing its own resources for defense and the building of a powerful military in a later piece because it has direct and very powerful implications for the Canadian resource sector, but for now, it should be apparent that the dynamic that has been set in motion by Trump is a conflict of visions between globalists and nationalists.

Steve Bannon, always good for a quote, summed this up not so eloquently at the World Government Summit in Dubai last summer, where he said “The globalists gutted the American working class and created a middle class in Asia. The issue now is about Americans looking to not get over.”

[Mealy-mouthed apologies came from the elites gathered at the summit](#), including Christine Lagarde, managing director of the International Monetary Fund. “We’ve been saying internationalization is great, global trade is great,” Lagarde was quoted in Politico. “But we haven’t been so focused on sharing the benefits.” No kidding.

Another expression of regret came from U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres: “Globalization has brought increasing wealth and improved welfare in general, but it also had its losses,” he said. “Many people feel that they have been left behind, and that the political establishments of their countries have not taken care of them.”

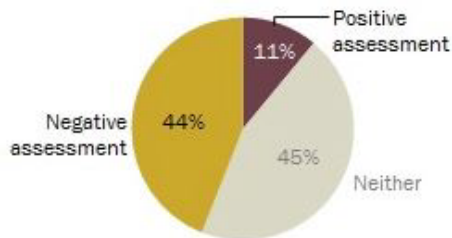
Role of the media

With most of the newsrooms of the “mainstream” media (ie. not Fox News or Breitbart) staffed with left-leaning editors and journalists who have spent their whole working lives believing and espousing the globalist world view, it is unsurprising that Trump, the nationalist, would come into conflict with the fourth estate.

A [study run by Pew Research Center's Journalism Project](#) said that in his first 60 days in office, two-thirds of news stories were negative on Trump, over twice the number of negative articles run from the first two months of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama's presidencies. According to Pew only 5% of the stories were positive on Trump compared to 42% for Obama. So is there a media bias against Trump and his nationalist, anti-globalist agenda? Most certainly. The numbers prove it.

Stories about Trump's first 100 days were four times as likely to carry a negative assessment as a positive one

% of Trump administration stories that had an overall ...



Note: Stories coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative stories had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other stories are coded as neither. N=3,013 stories.

Source: Pew Research Center content analysis of news stories from national newspaper websites, radio, cable and network broadcasts and websites, and digital outlets about President Trump or his administration, Jan. 21-April 30, 2017 (Monday-Friday).

"Covering President Trump in a Polarized Media Environment"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Indeed American media seems more intent on attacking Trump personally, focusing on inaccurate statements and unconventional approaches to the presidency, than examining the real motives behind his pro-US agenda. In a new book, veteran media reporter and Fox News host Howard Kurtz portrays the media as being "excessively negative in its treatment of President Donald Trump and essentially serving as opposition to the White House," [Politico reported in January](#). During the campaign the media was accused of paying much more attention to Trump and his mistakes than Hillary's.

The Independent noted that about [a third of Americans support the](#)

[President's belief that the media is an "enemy of the American people"](#) and back restrictions on the press, according to a 2017 survey. Part of this is being driven by Trump, who has refused to give interviews to the "fake news" (New York Times, CNN, Washington Post, etc) preferring to talk to right-leaning Fox News. In an article on the subject Vanity Fair writes that communications efforts are geared at the 38% of Trump supporters – as of November he had given 20 interviews to Fox News, with the New York Times, NBC, CBS and CNN interviewing him a total of 8 times.

"The mainstream press, ever pious, very much cares about this. The plurality of Americans who support Trump and might get him re-elected don't give a shit," Vanity Fair concludes.

Conclusion

Without being overly paranoid, there seems to be a giant cover up going on amongst the media and other elites who either are intent on hiding Trump's obvious shift away from globalism toward a nationalism that is completely in line with the Founding Fathers, or they are just unaware of what's going on – preferring to focus on sensational stories such as Stormy Daniels and the revolving staffer door at the Whitehouse.

As AOTH's deeper analysis has shown, President Trump's rise to power is very much tied into a global movement away from globalism and towards nationalism or its more sterile meme, populism. While nationalism, and

especially white nationalism, is often tied to racism by the mainstream media outlets, it doesn't have to be a negative phenomenon if we recognize that the nation-state is the fundamental element of all political systems. How each nation decides to interact with other nations is a matter for politicians, who represent the people, to decide.

In other words, globalism is not a system to which we have bought into that we cannot escape. Trump and others are not suggesting a return to cross-the-board protectionism which has obvious negative repercussions, but rather a picking and choosing of global elements that serve the national interest, and rejecting those that don't.

I've got this globalist-nationalist dynamic, and what it means for US economic policy going forward, particularly as it relates to tariffs, commodities and junior resource stocks on my radar screen. Do you?

If not, perhaps you should.

Richard (Rick) Mills

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